A DISCOURSE OF THE Misery of Hell: AND Happiness of Heaven,

Grounded from the following Words.

Matth. 25. 46. *And these shall go away into Everlasting Punishment, but the Righteous into Life Eternal.*

THE foregoing part of the Words is to be understood of the *Goats*, or those of *all Nations*, v. 32, 33. and *Generations*, who shall be placed on the Left Hand: That is, as it is spoken in other places of Scripture; such as shall then be found to have been Sinners, Unbelievers, Hypocrites, the Children of Disobedience, Wicked and Ungodly, and such like. According as is written, *The Hour is coming*, in the which *all that are in the Graves shall hear his Voice, and shall come forth. They that have done good unto the Resurrection of Life, and they that have done Evil unto the Resurrection of Damnation.* We are told, and warned what the final Condition of Mankind will be, and what shall be allotted to the one, and what shall be allotted to the other. Now, as we are in the Body, we are concerned herein; and in short, every one of us must go to one of them, either to Heaven, or to Hell. They go to Hell, to whom it is written, *And these shall go away into Everlasting Punishment.* And here this word, *Everlasting Punishment* sounds terrible and dismal at the very first; for alas! so weak and little, so sinful and impatient is our present Nature and Condition,

that we cannot, or at least we do not care to endure, or undergo any short Pain or Punishment now; how much more intollerable must that then be which is Eternal? Who now think it so irksome to tarry a few and evil Days here on Earth, although they have several good ones intermingled? How can they endure to be in Hell for Thousands and Millions of Years, without an Hour of Comfort or Freedom from Misery? Even now, although there are the Intervals of Sleep, and those necessary and common Actions of Life, which divert from the Sence and Feeling thereof, yet still a *wounded and troubled Spirit who can bear*? Much more may the Question be asked, Can thine Heart endure under the gnawing of the Worm which shall never die? To whom every least spark of Fire that falls upon any part of the Body is so painful, Can thine Hands be strong? or how can they abide to lie down in Everlasting Fire? Or how can they rest in a Cradle of Flames? Or to be refreshed in that *Fire which the Breath of the Lord like a stream of Brimstone doth kindle*. It is as bad, as bad can be. For lay together all the Evils, Pains, Torments, Fears, Diseases, Afflictions, Crosses, and such like, which are throughout the whole Earth, and they do not make up the ten thousandth part so bad as the Damnation of Hell.

It will be one of the Torments of Hell to be depriv'd not only from the Beatifical Vision, but even from the sight of the Heavens of God; (*Persecute and destroy them in Anger from under the Heavens of the Lord*, Lam. 3. 66.) which must needs be very melancholy and uncomfortable, not so much as to see the outside of that place, where Blessedness dwells. For if one should be kept in a very low Pit without Light or Company. What a restless thing would this be; or as they *took Jeremiah, and cast him down into the Dungeon that was in the Court of the Prison; and they let down Jeremiah with Cords; and in the Dungeon there was no Water but Mire, so Jeremiah sunk in the Mire*, Jer. 38. 6. Here were Sufferings indeed, which would make one's Heart ake to thoroughly think of it; much more would it fill the Soul with Anguish and Restlesness to undergo it. And what is it to be in a Dungeon for a few Days or Years, in comparison to be in the lowest Hell for all Eternity? The other is Light, and as nothing in comparison unto it.

As

As to all the Devices and Places of Torment, Vexation and Misery, which People now use one to another; all these are but Instruments in the Hands of God, who *created the Wasser to destroy*, and made all those Places and Things, which are now used for Pain and Punishment: And if he hath created such on this Earth, as we sensibly know and see; much more hath he created alike Things under the Earth, and in Hell beneath: *He is the great lawgiver, who is able to save, and to destroy.* As he doth Good, so likewise he can, and doth punish. There are on this Earth some things, which are very grievous and irksome; but as long as there is Life, even in the worst Evils that befall the Children of Men; there is no such thing as perfect, absolute and compleat Misery; I mean such Misery as is without any Good or Comfort. There is no such thing on Earth as *utter Darkness*, or the *Blackness of Darkness*; for in the most cloudy and misty Night some little of Light may be still perceived, especially if you look up towards Heaven. Again, on this Earth all things are short, and falling away: But in Hell it is perfect, compleat, and absolute Misery: That is, It is Misery wholly, throughout, and nothing but Misery. *The Egyptians had for three Days such Darkness which may be felt, even thick Darkness*, Exod. 10. 21, 22, 23. But in Hell there is utter Darkness, *cast the unprofitable Servant into utter Darkness, and the Blackness of Darkness for ever.* Which word *for ever* is the greatest thing and Aggravation of the Torment and Punishment thereof; for herein it infinitely exceeds, and is worse than all the Evils and Pains on this Earth, and of this State; for whereas they all pass away, either they go off again from the Sufferer, or else they make an end of the Sufferer, so as to kill him, and render him in such a Condition, that he becomes past feeling thereof. It will be otherwise in Hell; for there, *if the Spirit should fail before him, and the Souls which he hath made*, yet they are kept alive, still to undergo and endure the Severity of God's Vengeance. It is called Death, the *Second Death*; for it is a State of ever dying, and never dead. *In that Day shall Men seek Death, and it shall flee from them.* Now Death is the worst and most terrible thing in the World; for all other things are so much the more feared, as they may the sooner oc-

casion, or bring on this thing of Death: But the *second Death*, or *Death Eternal*, is indeed worse than any Tongue of Man can express forth. I cannot pencil forth Shadows dark enough to set forth the utmost Horror and Misery thereof. The Lord preserve every one that will be sure to comply, and to work together with his Grace from doing those things, the end whereof is *Death Eternal*: So that the Reader may not know and feel how bad indeed it is. One saith well, *Let us not flee from Sermons of Hell, that we may flee from Hell*; and by that manner of Speech of *John Baptist*, who hath warned you *to flee from the wrath to come*, Mat. 3. 7. We learn that it is a great part of the Ministerial Office and Duty, to warn People, that they flee from, and avoid, and use all Care and Diligence, lest they fall into Hell, and *to testifie unto them, lest they come to the place of Torment*, Luk. 16. 28. Accordingly I do take such to record, who shall Hear or Read this, that they do cease and abstain from all Appearance of Evil, and be sure not to do those things, to which this same future Punishment is annexed and threatned. We are told, that *the Sinners of Zion are afraid; fearfulness hath surprized the Hypocrites; who among us shall dwell with devouring Fire? who amongst us shall dwell with Everlasting Burnings*, Isa. 33. 14. *They that do Iniquity shall be cast into a Furnace of Fire*, Mat. 13. 41, 42. *The wrath of God cometh on the Children of Disobedience*, Col. 3. 6. so that the Consequence is Natural, Certain, and Necessary, That if we would not dwell with devouring Fire, and with Everlasting Burnings, nor yet be cast into a Furnace of Fire, nor yet fall under the Wrath of God; we must be sure to avoid all these four Things, *Sin, Hypocrisie, Iniquity* and *Disobedience*; and also, in order to escape Hell, set forth by all these kinds of Expressions, we must avoid Apostacy, or falling away, which I ground from this following Scripture: *For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the Truth, there remaineth no more Sacrifice for Sins; but a certain fearful looking for of Judgment, and fiery Indignation, which shall devour the Adversaries*, Heb. 10. 25, 26.

As we here see and know what we must avoid and eschew in order to escape from everlasting Punishment, (I will repeat them over again for more abundant Safety and Care)

It

It is *Sin, Hypocrisie, Iniquity*, (which signifies doing those things that are not equal) *Disobedience, Apostacy*, or *Falling away*. So on the other hand, we are shewed from out of the same Scriptures of Truth, what we are to do to obtain Eternal Life; *If thou wilt enter into life, keep the Commandments*, Mat. 19. 17. *Blessed are they that do his Commandments, that they may have Right unto the Tree of Life, and may enter in through the Gates into the City*, Rev. 22. 14. Or, as it is written, *The Righteous shall go into life eternal*.

Righteousness is a Comprehensive Word, and signifies a Conformity to all the Words of Gods Law in Scripture. *And it shall be our Righteousness, if we observe to do all these Commandments before the Lord our God, as he hath commanded us*, Deut. 6. 25. And as *Sin, Hypocrisie, Iniquity* and *Disobedience* do lead towards Hell, so this thing of *Righteousness* (through God's gracious acceptation thereof,) furthers towards Heaven. The Happiness and Blessedness whereof is called *Life Eternal*. Now there can be nothing better, and more desirable than Life. For by Life we receive, feel, and are rendred capable to enjoy all other things which can be had by Man. Accordingly, the Word of God which made Man, and the Spirit of God which knows what is in Man, do so express it. For by Life at first he is enabled to perceive Peace, Joy, Satisfaction and all those Good things. Said Jesus Christ, Who is the *Bread of God which cometh down from Heaven, and giveth Life unto the World*, John 6. 33. *I am come, that they might have Life more abundantly*. This is meant of that Godly and Spiritual Life on Earth, In order to an Eternal Life in the Heavens.

As it hath been afore observed, How the Everlasting Punishment is set forth by all those things which are Evil and sinful; so it is contrariwise as to Life Eternal, for that again is described by all those things which seem Good and delightful unto us, as by Meat, Drink, Riches, Pleasures, Gold, Peace, Joy, and such like. *Labour not for the Meat which perisheth, but for the Meat which endureth unto Everlasting Life*. And so it is most commonly expressed by the addition of that Epithet (*Everlasting*) to distinguish it from the short and perishing Pleasures here. *In thy presence is fulness of Joy*. This is opposite unto, and distinct

from that short and empty measure thereof, we have sometimes here, when the end of our Joy is Grief, and there is a mixture of Heavinels even in the midst of it. *And at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore*, Psal. 16. 11. Which is a great and remarkable diversity from those sudden and perishing Pleasures here. It is called *Everlasting Joy*, Isa. 35. 10. whereas all Joy here is but for a Moment, and for the present time. It is called *pure Gold*, in opposition to that mixture of Dross which is with it here. And *Perfect Peace*, Isa. 26. 3. To distinguish it again from that broken and interrupted Peace here. This Life is but Vain, and as a Vapour and continueth not; But the future Life is so substantial and enduring that it shall have no End. Whatever we meet with here which is delightful or pleasing, yet still we should *Prefer Jerusalem above our chief Joy*, Psal. 137. 6. So this should be the only Standard or Measure of all our Comfort or Vexation, as it furthers or hinders in the way to Heaven. So we should be contented or pleased therewith, and give God thanks for the same. As again, when it hinders or obstructs, or stops up the way against our going or Arriving there, this should be Grief and Vexation of Spirit. And we should endeavour as much against it as we can. Truly, mine own easiness or uneasiness of mind, doth wholly depend and turn upon this Point. As I do any thing which sets me one step forward in the way to Heaven, which I know assuredly from the Word of Truth (which shews and makes known the way of Life) as also from the approbation of mine own Conscience, being guided thereby; herein I rejoyce, and give God thanks on this behalf.

Again, It is unexpressible anguish and vexation of Soul, when any thing happens which turns me backward, or sets me out of the right way. Which again I know by the very same manner as I do the other, by its being against the Scriptures; as also, I find thereupon mine own thoughts accusing me, even a sensible Regret and Condemnation. *Notwithstanding in this rejoyce not, that the Spirits are subject unto you*, (which yet is a good cause of rejoycing, for those Spirits do very much lett, resist and hinder, in our doing the Will of God) *but rather rejoyce, because your Names are written in Heaven*, Luke 10 20. For by your Names being enrolled there, you are much more sure of

coming

comming to Heaven from the Decree of God, than the Spirits can possibly hinder. And so the same Reasoning is, Whatever your worldly Privileges and Advantages are, whether thou hast Riches, or respect from Men, whether thou hast Wisdom, Beauty, Health, or whatever is now usually deem'd, or esteem'd by the Children of Men. In this rejoyce not but rather rejoyce, because thou hast a well grounded Hope to go to Heaven, because the Promises do belong to thee, and thou art within the Covenant, and also to thee pertaineth the Adoption, inasmuch as thou art so long a Son and Servant of God, as thou dost his Will, and obeyest his Commands. The Scripture doth make known the place of Heaven, and also the way which each one must walk in, if he would arrive at, and enter therein, *viz.* by keeping the Commandments of God, which are written and recorded in that same Book.

The People of old time, and of former Generations, did talk and preach of the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God, after the same manner as we do now. Such as were his Saints and Children did *live by Faith*, Hab. 2. 4. and *died in Faith*; *Not having received the Promises, but having seen them afar off, and were perswaded of them, and embraced them*, Heb. 11. 13. And even the ignorant and ungodly Multitude of former Generations, have also passed through the Door, or Gate and Entrance into the invisible World: I mean Death. And as the *Devils believe and tremble*. And as the Souls of *Abraham*, *Isaac* and *Jacob*, do at this Day live; so their Souls also live and exist, and they have a more clear knowledge and apprehension of the Decree of God concerning Mankind than they had, or we have in the days of our Flesh, so that in them who sin wilfully, what was formerly Ignorance or Unbelief, is now a certain fearful looking for of Judgment, and fiery Indignation, which shall devour them for having been God's Adversaries. But such as in the Days of their Flesh were *willing* and *obedient*, they *shall eat the good of the Land*, Isa. 1. 19. even of the new Heavens and new Earth, where Righteousness dwells. And as those who did *refuse* and *rebel*, shall have a certain fearful looking for of Judgment, so unto the *Upright there ariseth Light in the Darkness*, even after they are passed the darkness of the shadow of Death, and they have a comfortable expectation of good things

to come. The Children of Men will then remember how that the Sinners, and Ungodly, and merry Men of the World, did in their life time receive their good things, that is, they received their *Portion in this Life*, Psal. 17. 14. *Because by them their Portion is fat, and their Meat plenteous*, Hab. 1, 16. And the Godly and Righteous received evil things, Persecutions, Afflictions, Poverty, *but now they are comforted, and the others are tormented*, Luke 16. 25. As is the condition of those who are already gone off from the Stage of this Earth, so will ours be in a short time; they are dead, and we are dying.

As for my part I was young, and now am elderly, tho not old, and I am fearful and apprehensive every Week of tasting of this bitterness of Death. But I do yet more exceedingly fear and quake, lest my Soul should be shut under Hatches by Death, before I have a better and more assured Hope whither it would go. As it is written, *Gather not my Soul with Sinners*, Psal. 26. 9. So it is the continued Desire and Prayer of my Soul, as the same should be my utmost endeavour throughout this life. O Lord, our Creator, the Invisible One, when this Body must return to the Earth as it was, and the Spirit to God that gave it, O then do Thou not gather my Soul with the Sinners and Transgressors of former Generations. Which Prayer as I did write down, and lift up my Soul unto God for the same, it was thereupon immediately answered, directed, and dictated unto me, That if thou wouldest not have thy Soul gathered with the Sinners and Transgressors of former Generations, then thou must be sure not to be one of their number; that is, thou must not be a Sinner and Transgressor in that Generation wherein thou now livest. But this is my Request, and my coueting, and the thing that I long for, That the Lord would be pleased to bind up my Soul in the bundle of Life. Into thy Hands I commit my Spirit, for Thou hast Redeemed me, O Lord God of Truth, that my Soul may be gathered up unto the Father of Spirits; and that when I do depart, or decease from out of this Body, I may come unto Mount *Sion, and to the City of the Living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable Company of Angels, to the general Assembly and Church of the First-born, which are written in Heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the Spirits of Just Men made perfect.*

My

My Fleſh and my Heart faileth; but God is the ſtrength of my Heart, and my Portion for ever, Pſal. 73. 26. It is certain that this Fleſh doth fade as a Leaf, wax old like a Garment, and wither as a Stick, and it will not long hold the Soul in; and therefore againſt the time that this our Heart and our Fleſh faileth (yea, our Heart faileth already, and before-hand at the thorough Thought and Apprehenſion thereof) It muſt be our beſt and wiſeſt, and moſt excellent way to have God for the Strength of our Heart, and for our Portion for ever. That againſt the time this Tenement of Clay fails, by mouldering and falling down into the Duſt; He may take us unto his own Home, and receive us into Everlaſting Manſions, which are in our Father's Houſe. That as it is written, *And ye ſhall go forth, and grow up as the Calves of the Stall*, Mal. 4.2. So we may be fixed and ſeated in Stalls and Apartments of Glory. *For the Lord's Portion is his People*; Jacob *is the lot of his Inheritance*; *He found him in a deſert Land, in the waſte howling Wilderneſs*, Deut. 32. 9, 10. This laſt is juſt like our Condition now here on Earth, where God finds and culls out ſuch and ſuch of the Sons and Daughters of Men (*the Lord knoweth them that are his*) as are his People, and *Jacob for the lot of his Inheritance*. Now a Lot takes ſome, and leaves others, even a few, and ſingle ones from out of the Multitude: So of old time he took out *Jacob* for his peculiar People from the reſt of Mankind. *Now therefore if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ſhall ye be a peculiar people unto me above all people, for all the earth is mine*, Exod. 19.4. And ſo he doth at this day take out by Lot as it were his peculiar People from all Nations, Countrys, and Languages of Mankind, even only thoſe who obey his Voice indeed, and keep his Covenant. Both the Voice & Covenant ſhewed and manifeſted within them; as alſo what is written in Ink and Paper in the lively Oracles, the Book of the Lord, which we commonly call the Bible.

There is a very great deal ſaid in the *Old Teſtament* concerning Heaven, Immortality, and Eternal Life; yea, much more then many People are aware of; for Heaven, Immortality and Eternal Life are there couched and comprehended under all thoſe ſeveral Expreſſions (which are repeated over innumerable times in the Books of *Moſes*, the *Pſalms*, and the *Prophets*,) *The Lords portion is his people*; *the Lord*,

the

the hope of their fathers, Jer. 50. 7. *Happy is that people whose God is the Lord*, Pſal. 144. 15. *Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the Lord his God*, Pſal. 146. 5. And by all ſuch Phraſes and Forms of Speech there, which the Holy Ghoſt makes uſe of, to ſhew that ſuch of his Creatures as ſerve and obey him, they have alſo an Intereſt and Propriety in him. He is *their God*, or *my God*, or ſuch like. In all theſe as under a Veil is contained Heaven, Immortality, and Eternal Life. For there is a way of aſſuredly gathering and reaſoning out of the Scriptures, to bring out ſuch and ſuch Truths, although they ſeem to ſpeak nothing thereof in plain and expreſs Words. Even ſo it is here, for by the ſame way of aſſuredly gathering and reaſoning out of the Scriptures as is uſed in *Heb.* 11. 16. *He was not aſhamed to be called their God*, (ſo far goes the Text there cited out of the *Old Teſtament*, but then ſaith the Reaſoning by the Spirit further) *for he hath prepared for them a City*. From this very place we lay down and eſtabliſh that grand Poſition and Affirmation, which is certainly true, That where-ever in the *Old Teſtament* God is ſaid to be their God, therein is contained the Promiſe of Heaven, Immortality, and Eternal Life; this being *that City which he hath prepared for them*. And to make this Matter a little more plain and clear, the Reaſon hereof ſtands on this wiſe, *He is not aſhamed to be called their God, for he hath prepared for them a City*. That is, They had Confidence and Aſſurance that God would do ſomewhat more for his Servants than Temporal and preſent Mercies, for they were alſo common unto others: But as he is juſt and good, ſo he would make ſome Requital for Obedience, and for that Hardſhip and Inconvenience his Servants meet with from the World for his ſake, which they did expect hereafter in another place, and that is Heaven; and alſo themſelves ſhould remain, or elſe be raiſed up again into a State capable to receive and partake of that great Good God had prepared for his Creatures, which muſt be by continuing or giving them Life again. For they were ſenſibly bereaved of this preſent Life, and here they did not continue, by reaſon of Death: So that of Neceſſity therein muſt virtually be contained the Promiſe of Immortality and Eternal Life; and therefore *Paul* ſaith appoſitely and pertinently to the Matter here treated of, in *Hope of Eter-*

nal

nal Life, which God, that cannot lie promised before the World began; but hath in due time manifested his Word through preaching, Tit. 1. 2. for discovery hath been made thereof by little and little. It was contained in those general Expressions afore-mentioned; *the Lord their God, I am the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*, and such like. God was the same then, and his Decrees alike sure, although they were not so clearly made known unto Men. And therefore now it is called Hope, *which entreth into that within the vail*, Heb. 6. 19. *a better hope*, Heb. 7. 19. *a lively hope*, 1 Pet. 1. 3. all in opposition to those faint Guesses, and imperfect Knowledge they had thereof under the Law. It is speaking plainly under the Gospel, according to *John* 16. 25. in opposition to those *dark Speeches*, which God spake by *Moses*, or those Parables and Proverbs, which he spake by his Servants, the Prophets. They under the *Old-Testament* Dispensation had but a dull and glimmering Prospect beyond the Earthly *Canaan*: But now the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ *hath abolished Death, and hath brought Life and Immortality to light thro' the Gospel*, 2 Tim. 1. 10.

And tho in the Gospel it is spoken more plainly concerning Heaven, Immortality, and Eternal Life, and also more suitable unto our Carnal Apprehensions, and Fleshly Mind, in describing it by the outward Representations of a Marriage Supper, Gold, Honour, Pleasure, Satisfaction, Blessedness, and such like; yet there is also somewhat spoken of these things in the *Old-Testament*: But all that, and much more than all that, is comprehended under that one saying; *The Lord our God, the Lord is my Portion for ever.*

Perhaps the Hearer or Reader may expect, that now I am a discoursing of the Happiness of Heaven: here I should be unto thee as a *very lovely Song of one that hath a pleasant Voice, and can play well on an Instrument*, Ezek. 33. 32. This being so very delightful a Subject; that if here thou canst not tickle the Ear, and please thy Auditory, thou never wilt.

But now suppose I should here use Ten Thousand Words in Rhetorical Flourishes, in the greatest Eloquency, and Wit of Man, with the most smooth Language, with the greatest Connexion, and Exactness of Stile, and all concerning this best of Subjects, the Happiness or Joys of Heaven; yet as it is said, *That she who cast her two mites into the trea-*

treasury, cast in more than all they who gave of their abundance: So here it would be, there would be more said concerning Heaven in these four or five words only; *the Lord my God,* or *the Lord is my Portion for ever.* For all these are the Words which the Spirit did dictate, so that there is more contain'd in them than in five Millions of other Words concerning it.

This will also further appear from this following significancy and Reasoning, *viz.* If the Lord is our God, or if the Lord is my Strength, and my Portion for ever, thence it follows also of consequence, That all that Blessedness, Happiness, Goodness, Delight, Satisfaction and Immortality, which is in God the Everlasting Creator of the Ends of the Earth, (as it is all in him, which is any where in the World; for they are all but Rays and Emanations from this infinite Fountain of Life and Being;) I say, all these are communicated and imparted forth, (even as far as the small Vessel is capable to receive brimfull, and running over) to such of his Creatures and People, to whom he is the Lord their God, and they are his Portion, and the Lot of his Inheritance, as they can reciprocally say, *The Lord is my strength, and my portion for ever.*

There is but one thing in the World which hinders all the reasonable Creatures on the Earth, from this Blessedness and Union with their God, and that is Sin. O accursed thing! which we gather assuredly from what is written; *Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord,* Acts 3. 19. As the foregoing part of the Verse doth illustrate and shew that, so by the latter part of the Verse, the Holy Ghost doth signifie, that such of his Creatures as shall then be more nearly and immediately in the Presence of God (where is fulness of Joy, and at whose Right Hand are Pleasures for evermore;) all Refreshing, Content, Satisfaction, yea, and Happiness doth arise from him; as Waters do flow from the Fountain, Light doth proceed from the Sun, or as Heat doth issue forth from Burning Fire to the things that are next unto it.

As on the foregoing part of our Being he is our Creator, and he is our Preserver in the mean while, who holds our Soul in Life all the time that it is in the Body; and afterwards also he that first breathed into us the Breath of Life,

can

can, and also doth preserve it when it is gone forth: So in his being our Portion for ever, he will take Care of and do good for us in the time to come, and throughout the succeeding Eternity. *Unto God shall all flesh come*, Ps. 65. 2. that is, good and bad promiscuously to appear before him in judgment; but *unto him shall the gathering of the People be*, Gen. 49. 10. This in a particular manner is meant of his own particular Elect, Redeemed and Chosen People, who in this Life, and on this Earth do gather, and make towards God by Faith and Obedience, by Love, Trust, and Adherence; and hereafter they shall flow back unto (as Rivers again to the Sea, from whence they did first arise) and be admitted into his immediate Presence to the neareſt Communion, and closeſt Union with the Godhead himself. He will gather all Souls which are his, which he hath made, and which he hath redeemed, that is from Sin here, and from Death and the Devil hereafter, as nearly, and as closely to himself, as *a Hen doth gather her Chickens under her Wings*. It is somewhat too grosſ an Expreſſion to say, that the Souls of the Righteous shall be incorporated with the Deity; for that denotes somewhat too material a Conception of such Spiritual and Immaterial things. But the Union will be as near, and as close as what is ingrafted into such a Stock, is near and close to the same stock, and it becomes as one, and the same with it. *And the nations of them that be saved, shall walk in the light of it*, Rev. 21. 24. But this is not all; for further, they shall be one, and as it were the same with God himself. *Holy Father keep through thine own Name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one as we are: And now I come to thee, that they may be all in one, as thou Father art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us*, Joh. 17. 11, 13, 21. This being one, and as it were the same with God, (who shall then be all in all, but the Creatures have and derive it from him by Union and participation) will be the highest and greatest, and only Happineſs in Heaven. The Truth whereof may be hence understood, for God is a most happy Being: For he created all Happineſs and Good, and he is comprehensive of all Happineſs and Good; so that all Happineſs and Good do reside and lodge in him, as in their Foundation Stock or Fountain; from whence do flow forth all Derivations and Emanations of Good and Happineſs;

neſs: So as when any one is nearer to the Sun, he is nearer to the Light and Heat; ſo the Nations and Perſons of thoſe who are ſaved, who are nearer to God, are alſo thereby nearer to Good and Happineſs. Himſelf in a peculiar and eminent manner is ſtiled the *Bleſſed*, *Art thou Chriſt the Son of the Bleſſed*, *Mark* 14. 61. And as Chriſt himſelf doth promiſe, *Where I am there ſhall my ſervant be; if any man ſerve me, him will my father honour*, John 12.26. *That they may be all one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee; that they alſo may be one in us. And the glory which thou gaveſt me, I have given them, that they may be one, even as we are one*, John 17. 22, 23. which Prayer of Chriſt is heard and granted; accordingly he elſewhere calls him, *My Father and your Father, my God and your God*, Joh. 20. 17. By expreſſing of which, on this wiſe he ſhews himſelf to be the firſt born of many Brethren, that Chriſt in all things ſhould have the Pre-eminence: But from all this put together, it may be moſt ſurely Argued and Reaſoned, that if Chriſt be the Son of the bleſſed, then they that are Chriſt's, are the Sons of the Bleſſed; and accordingly the Scripture doth elſewhere expreſly averr the ſame, *Behold, now are we the ſons of God*, 1 John 3. 2. and if they are the Sons of the Bleſſed, *then we know that when he ſhall appear, we ſhall be like him; for we ſhall ſee him as he is*. This Reaſoning out of the Scriptures is right preaching, for ſo did *Paul* reaſon out of the Scriptures concerning ſeveral things; and ſo are we allowed to bring out all thoſe many Truths, relating to the Kingdom of God, and man's Salvation. We know further that ſome of his bleſſedneſs will be derived from him, and conveyed and communicated forth unto us. The leaſt Drop or Ray whereof will then ſuffice us; for we are but little Beings, and that is of infinite Contentment and Satisfaction. As the Apoſtle argues, *Furthermore, we have Fathers of our Fleſh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence, ſhall we not much rather be in ſubjection to the father of ſpirits, and live? for they verily for a few days chaſtened us after their own pleaſure; but he for our Profit, that we might be partakers of his holineſs*, Heb. 12. 9, 10. From which very laſt words I do reaſon, that if we may be partakers of his Holineſs here (as this Text doth moſt plainly import, that we may) then aſſuredly we ſhall be partakers of this Happineſs and Bleſſedneſs hereafter. From whence note, That the only way to Happineſs

is

is by Holiness, because of what is said in this same Chapter, *Without holiness no man shall see the Lord*, ver. 24. who have not Holiness here, that man or Woman will not have Happiness or Blessedness hereafter.

Concerning this future and everlasting Happiness of Blessedness, many things do arise in the Mind which are hard to be uttered, and hard to be conceived. For since *the beginning of the World, Men have not heard nor perceived by the hears, neither hath the Eye seen, O God, besides thee, what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him*, Isa. 64. 4. (As we do this Day in this Ordinance of Hearing his word) or that love him. But *God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit.* Which same Spirit spake by the Prophets, Christ and the Apostles, out of whose Words and Writings this same description of Heaven, and the Joys thereof, hath been brought forth.

And what shall I say more? where I begun and found it, there I must leave it. If I should multiply never so many Words, I cannot say more than what I have said already. That the whole of Heaven, and the Happiness thereof, is comprised in these very few Words, *The Lord our God, the Lord is the Strength of my heart, and my Portion for ever.* Or in the Language of the Gospel. *We* (that is, only his Elect) *shall ever be with the Lord*, 1 Thess. 4. 17. If you set aside these kind of Expressions, and then if you Read, or Hear never so much concerning Heaven; yet when you come there, you will affirm, as the Queen of *Sheba* did of the Wisdom of *Solomon*, *The one half was not told me.* But if you once add and mention, *The Lord shall be my Portion for ever*: Or, *We shall ever be with the Lord*, therein the whole and utmost of Heaven was told unto thee before hand, and the Souls of such as shall be Saved, and admitted there, will make their return, *As we have heard, so have we seen, in the City of the Lord of Hosts, in the City of our God, God will Establish it for ever.* Selah. *Psal.* 48. 8.

When the Apostle *Paul*, in 1 *Thes.* 4. doth mention how *we shall ever be with the Lord*; He thereupon immediately annexes and subjoyns, Wherefore comfort (in the Marginal Reading, there it is exhort) *One another with these Words.* And as it is here said, *God will establish it* (that is, the City he hath prepared for his People, *for ever Selah.* So it is Meet and Right, that by the way of Retaliation and Common good Will, (*Paul* Calls it a *Good Mind* towards God) this

this little while that we are in the way, that his Servants and their Seed should be established before him, in his Worship and Service, in finishing his Work and doing his Will. They should be settled, fixed and rooted herein.

Be thou faithful unto Death, and I will give thee a Crown of Life, Rev. 2. 10. *But he that shall endure unto the end the same shall be saved*, Mat. 24. 13. Hereby also People will be enabled in this World of Tryal and Temptation, to chuse *rather to suffer affliction with the People of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the Reproaches of Christ greater Riches than the Treasures of* Egypt. For he had *respect unto the recompence of reward*, Heb. 11. 25, 26. So they will go through the course (of what is imagined the dulness, irksomness, and tediousness of a Religious Life, which indeed is real Peace and Satisfaction to the Heart of Man, to such who universally comply and conform unto it all along, although the World, and Strangers to this Joy, and also our fleshly corrupt Nature are apt to call it to) rather than to enjoy the outward Mirth, Recreations and Pleasures of Sin for a season, knowing that all the Reproaches and Inconveniencies which we meet withal, for holding and continuing in this our good way, *are greater Riches than the Treasures of the World, for we have respect unto the recompence of reward.* Keep an Eye still to that, and this will prevent that we wax not weary in well doing; for we shall reap, in due season, if we faint not. Whilest, let others do what they will, we do all along follow, propose and endeavour after an end which is worthy, *viz.* To serve God here with all our Mind, Body, and Estate that we may enjoy Him hereafter, and so *ever be with the Lord, Amen.*

Written by **Richard Stafford.**

FINIS

LONDON: Printed, and are to be Sold by *E. Whitlock*, near *Stationers-Hall*, 1697.